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ABSTRACT

A study investigated classroom management from the students' perspective. Ninety-seven high school students (primarily ninth graders) were observed in one school for 15 weeks in five different classes. Data were collected from this observation, as well as from student and teacher interviews. The guidelines of the Constant-Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis were used to generate and analyze theoretical constructs suggesting what classroom goals students sought, what strategies they developed to achieve these goals, when they chose to use these strategies, and what types of students used each strategy. Findings show that students had two major goals to achieve, "socializing" and "passing the course." They used six strategies to achieve these goals: (1) "figuring out the teacher"; (2) "having fun"; (3) "giving the teacher what he wants"; (4) "minimizing work"; (5) "reducing boredom"; and (6) "staying out of trouble." These strategies fall into the preliminary category, the proactive category, and the reactive category, each category being associated with particular kinds of classroom events. Students can be identified and clustered into four major groups according to the ratio of time spent "socializing" or "passing the course": play, play/work, work/play, or work. Important for students are the clarity with which teachers communicate their academic and behavioral expectations to students and the degree of cooperation that exists between the students and the teacher. (JM)

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Classroom Management: Students' Perspectives, Goals and Strategies

James D. Allen

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Conceptualization of the Problem

A majority of recent research literature on classroom management has focused on establishing teacher behaviors that best discipline students (Brophy & Rohrkemper,1980; Buckley & Cooper,1978; Duke,1979,1980; Emmer & Evertson,1980; Rohrkemper & Brophy,1980; Woods,1980). One only has to view the current 1983 AERA Annual Meeting Program in regards to papers presented under the sponsorship of SIG:Classroom Management, to note the emphasis on teachers controlling students and equating classroom management with the discipline of students. For example, paper titles and session titles include; Acceptability of Behavior Interventions used in Classrooms, Conventional Classroom Controls vs. Low Profile Controls, Trends in Student Discipline Problems, A Decade of Discipline. The State of the Art of Classroom Management.

This viewpoint of equating classroom management with the discipline of students is understandable in light of the fact, according to the 1982 Gallup Poll, that the general public still views discipline as the number one problem in our schools. This unidirectional thinking and research efforts on classroom management, to establish strategies for teachers to more effectively control students, seems to this author as unproductive, in the long run, for establishing mentally healthy classrooms for students to learn. This over emphasis on disciplining students could lead to greater "guerilla warfare" in classrooms between students and teachers and a not so inaccurate student viewpoint that classrooms are prisons (Jackson,1968; Alschuler,1980; Waller,1932).

This paper assumes that classroom management, to be truely effective in establishing "an environment in which instruction and learning can occur" (Duke, 1979), needs to be viewed and researched as more than teachers learning how to discipline and exert greater control over students' behaviors. Specifically, this paper proposes that the management of classrooms should be viewed as being

bidirectionally influenced. That is, students influence teachers' classroom management behaviors, as well as, teachers influence students' behaviors.

While a few researchers have pointed out the bidirectional nature of influence on student-teacher classroom interactions (Hunt,1976; Brophy & Good, 1974; Alschuler,1980; Rohrkemper,1980; Calvert,1975; Hargreaves,1972), they have only investigated these interactions from the teachers' perspective. For example, the entire volume of the 1979 NSSE Yearbook, Classroom Management, is written from this singular perspective. The research presented in this paper, however, investigated classroom management interactions between students and teachers from the students' perspective, the missing perspective on classroom management.

The theoretical framework for viewing classroom management from the students' perspective is based on symbolic interaction theory (Becker,1968; Blumer,1962; Hargreaves,1972; Mead,1934; Shibutani,1962; Woods,1980). In brief, this theoretical viewpoint assumes that in the interaction between two groups, in this case students as the managee and teachers as the managers, individuals act from a group perspective based on the culture of their group. Thus, students' behaviors in the classroom are based on the norms of the student/youth culture (Becker,1961; Block,1981; Calvert,1975; Coleman,1961; Cusick,1973; Everhart, 1976; Foster,1974; Jackson,1968; Meyenn,1980; Werthman,1963) and teachers' behaviors are based on the norms of the teacher/adult culture (Jackson,1968; Lortie,1975; Schlechty,1976; Waller,1932). Understanding the way in which the students' culture manifests itself in the classroom through the strategies and goals of their classroom agenda should provide a deeper understanding of student-teacher interaction and classroom management.

Figure 1. illustrates the bidirectional viewpoint assumed in this paper.

Figure 1.

On the right of Figure 1 , and illustrated by solid lines, is the historical viewpoint and direction of research on classroom management. Investigators view classroom interactions from the perspective of adult teachers, who may have either an effective or ineffective agenda for managing their classrooms. The teachers' agenda includes certain strategies, some of which help teachers to achieve their classroom management goals, and some of which help teachers to prevent students from achieving their goals.

On the left of Figure 1, and illustrated by broken lines, is the viewpoint from which the author investigated classroom management. Classroom interaction was viewed from the perspective of adolescent students, who, it was hypothesized, also should have a certain agenda to complete that influences the management of their classrooms. If such an agenda could be shown to exist, it would have certain strategies to help students achieve their agenda goals, as well as, certain strategies to help students circumvent or adapt to the teachers' goals. Thus, viewing classroom management from the students' perspective is the other, but for the most part previously missing, half to the research on classroom management from a bidirectional viwpoint.

There are two essential research questions to be considered in viewing classroom management from the students' perspective. The first is to establish that students do have certain strategies to achieve certain goals which form their classroom agenda. The second is to establish the degree to which these strategies influence teachers in establishing how the classroom is managed.

The purpose of the research presented in this paper was to answer the first question. The conclusion is that students do have classroom goals and certain strategies they use to achieve these goals. It is also concluded that particular strategies were used by different types of students during different types of classroom events.

The second question regarding how strongly these student strategies influence teachers' classroom management behaviors, needs to be addressed in future studies. However, ancillary data from this study indicate that teachers are influenced to various degrees by students' strategies and that these strategies effect the management of the classroom.

Method

An exploratory field study (Wolcott,1975) was initiated to investigate classroom management from the students' perspective. Data were collected through participating observation, student interviews and teacher interviews. The guidelines of the Constant-Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis (Glaser & Strauss,1967) were used to generate and analyze from the data theoretical constructs suggesting what classroom goals students sought, what strategies they developed to acheive these goals, when they chose to use these strategies, and what types of students used each strategy.

The researcher became a participating observer for 15 weeks in five different classes at a high school. Ninety-seven (97) different students, primarily ninth graders, were observed. The classes reflected the ethnic composition of the school and community; 65% Anglo, 35% Mexican-American. There were 63 males and 34 females

As a participating observer, the author not only observed these 97 students and 4 teachers, he also observed himself as he actively participated as a student

in each of these classes. By actually taking on the student role in the classroom, the author was able to observe his own phenomenological experience which was invaluable in establishing an understanding of many of the students' behaviors during the observations and students' responses during the interviews. This experience included feelings of fear and anxiety for having lessons unprepared, anger and resentment toward the teacher for his belittling and sarcastic remarks and reprimands, enjoyment and fun by sharing in humorous banter between students and teachers, and boredom from poorly prepared and redundant instruction. Thus, a fuller understanding and better interpretation of students' behavior could be gained as an active particpating observer that could have been obtained as a passive participant observer.

Field notes were written during each class to record general and specific behaviors and interactions among students and between students and teachers. These field notes were typed and analyzed daily to form preliminary and general classifications of types of strategic student behavior (strategies) and possible reasons for these behaviors (goals). Classifications were also made of when students engaged in these behaviors and who the students were exhibiting recorded behaviors.

During the last 7 weeks, 15 different students from these classes were interviewed. These students were choosen according to four criteria: (1) the involvement and influence that a student seemed to have on the way in which a classroom becamed managed, (2) students ability to articulate their viewpoints, (3) the number of observed classes in which a student was enrolled, and (4) the rapport in which the author had established with particular students. Following interview guidelines developed by Elmore and Thompson (1980), a semi-structured interview procedure was used in which students first presented a statement of how they viewed activities in their classes which was followed up by probing

questions by the interviewer (see Appendix A). Interviews varied from 30 to 60 minutes and were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

One month after the conclusion of the observation and student interviews, three teachers were interviewed. Although the primary purpose of the study was to obtain the students' perspective, the teachers' perspective was obtained for validation of and comparison with the author's observation and student interview data. Ancillary data were also obtained from interviewing teachers that suggests that teachers' classroom management behaviors are influenced by student classroom strategies. Teacher interviews were conducted along similar lines as the student interviews and varied in length from 1 to 2 hours (see Appendix B).

Although preliminary analysis occurred continually throughout the study, generating possible classification categories, the concluding analysis occurred after gathering all the data from the three sources (field notes, student interviews, teacher interviews). This analysis consisted of continual resorting of the data into different and new classifications of goals, strategies, types of events, and types of students. Classifications were accepted, rejected or changed as all three data sources were validated against one another. Although the unit of analysis (i.e., what to classify as goals vs. what to classify as strategies) could vary, the author attempted the most parsimonious classification to include as much of the data as possible. After several months of checking the data, classification, rechecking the data, reclassification, etc., several constructs developed that were in concordance with all data sources.

Findings

Students had two major goals that they wished to achieve in the classroom. These goals were: (1) SOCIALIZING and (2) PASSING THE COURSE (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Six strategies were used to help students achieve these goals and occurred at three different times. "Figuring out the teacher" (FT) was the preliminary strategy used during the initial events of the class. "Having fun" (HF), "Giving the teacher what he wants" (GT), and "Minimizing work" (MW) were the three proactive strategies used during the routine events of the class. "Reducing boredom" (RB) and "Staying out of trouble" (ST) were the reactive strategies used during the critical classroom events. Who (student types) used each of these strategies is characterized along a PLAY/WORK dimension.

Goals

One of the major reasons that students like school is that it is where they can gather and socialize with their friends (Henry,1963; Cusick,1973). This socialization, from the students' perspective, naturally carries over into the classroom and accounts for much of their in-class behavior. SOCIALIZING entails interactions with other students, as well as with the teacher. These interactions usually concerned non-academic matters and took the forms of talking, joking about out of class interests, and general playful behavior. These behaviors were intrinsically motivated and were related to students' norms to create an enjoyable experience with their friends in the classroom.

> I just like to talk to people around me. Rick and that guy that sits behind me.... I just fool around with people around me... just trying to make jokes.
>
> (student #10)

PASSING THE COURSE involved engaging in activities, both individually and in cooperation with peers, which helped students to satisfy the requirements for passing a particular course. These activities were viewed by students as work. They included classwork, homework, boardwork, seatwork, oral drill work, written work, and worksheets. Whereas SOCIALIZING was intrinsically motivated, PASSING THE COURSE was usually extrinsically motivated by the teacher.

> We write our homework on the board...and we do exercises...stuff like writing down, listening, repeating.... And then always at the end of class there's time to do the homework.... That was a class where not many people messed around.. The first quarter I got a D- and I did really bad. And then the second time I did really good and got a B.... I was working hard the second one doing more stuff, studying the spelling more.
>
> (student #6)

With few exceptions (e.g., sleeping, psychological withdraw, etc.) all student behaviors in the classroom could be seen as directed toward fullfillment of one of these two student goals. Every student interviewed mentioned these two goals as objectives to their behaviors (see Figure 3). Students viewed these two goals as distinct from one another, but both seemed, from the students' perspective, suitable for simultaneous achievement.

> I just go in and screw around a little bit in the beginning of the class...but then I buckle down and get my work done.
>
> (student #1)

> We all fool around. We all participate in the little practices too.
>
> (student #10)

> Most people just think 'here's another day to goof off', because they like to mess around in class... not many want to learn, they just think it's (classwork) something that they have to do, so they just go along with the flow.
>
> (student #11)

Figure 3.

Strategies

The six strategies used by students for SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE fell into three major categories: (1) a preliminary strategy, (2) three proactive strategies, and (3) two reactive strategies. Each of these categories was associated with particular types of classroom events, respectively, (1) initial events, (2) routine events, and (3) critical events.

The first strategy, "Figuring out the teacher", was the preliminary strategy that students used during the first few days of each class (initial events). It was the basic starting point for students to figure out what the teacher's limits were for socializing in class and what his requirements were for passing the course.

> Were you there the first days? He said "I'm an easy teacher, you just got to do the homework, then it's an easy class to get through." It's an easy class, but there's too much work.
>
> (student #13)

This allowed students to determine what strategies could be employed to achieve SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE goals.

Some of the major tactics used in the "Figuring out the teacher" strategy included; a 'wait and see' period to find out what the teacher said regarding classroom expectations, a period of 'clarification' from the teacher regarding his requirements and expectations, and a 'testing' period to establish the boundary of the limits to which the teacher could be pushed on his requirements before disciplinary action was initiated.

During the 'wait and see' period, for example, students were extremely quiet and appreciated teachers being explicit about their expectations of students' behavior.

> He was blunt in telling us the rules...some teachers, like Mr. Heed, didn't out and out say this and this can get you in alot of trouble.
>
> (student #1)

If teachers were not explicit about the rules, students would often ask questions to clarify what the teacher's expectations were. After the first few quiet days of discovering what the expectations and standards for behavior and academic performance were, students would begin testing the teacher's limits. This included determining the general personality of the teacher and the level of 'take-it-ness' and fairness that the teacher had in enforcing his rules.

> Like I said, Mr. Heed's the one that can take it, and Mr. Span and Mr. Ag they can't take it.
>
> (student #10)

> You can't joke around in there or anything. You don't know how he'll (Mr. Span) take it. Mr. Heed you can (joke around).
>
> (student #15)

After "Figuring out the teacher", usually only a matter of a few days, students were able to begin using their other strategies that directly helped them achieve their SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE goals.

Having fun

During the routine events of the class, those events that students described as normally constituting what should go on in class, three types of strategies were used. They are referred to as proactive strategies since they were initiated by students regardless of what the teacher's classroom expectations were. They were the preferred strategies that students used to actively achieve their goals.

The "Having fun" strategy was the proactive strategy used by students that was focused strictly on achievement of SOCIALIZING. This strategy included tactics such as, peer cooperation, humor, playing around, and social talking. The tactic of peer cooperation points out the group based nature of "Having fun". It was a necessary element fo all SOCIALIZING.

> They (students) start talking to their neighbors or... someone starts flicking around those chinesse footballs, ... that leads to other people talking.
>
> (student #1)

Humor often took the form of joking around with the teacher or making fun of the subject matter. For students, these seemed to contribute positively to the management of the class and promoted a more relaxed environment for learning, due to the teacher's sense of humor. The exchanges with the teacher, for example, often arose out of common interests in a topic (e.g., sports).

> Mr. Heed usually fools around with us, like he wants to talk about basketball in there... and he likes to talk about sports and all that.
>
> (student #10)

Other "Having fun" tactics involved playing with toys or props, such as, paper chinesse footballs. These were covert and the vast majority of these activities went undetected by teachers. In one class, for example, the author counted over fifty incidents of students flipping paper footballs within a 15 minute period. At one point, seven students were involved in this activity without the teacher's awareness.

> Larry makes those (paper footballs). He...shoots them at Kathy, Juan. Then Ron made a couple of footballs and he threw them all over...He was throwing them... when Juan was writing stuff on the board...he hit him right in the back of the head.
>
> (student #9)

Social talking included general talking to friends about non-academic and out of class activities.

> I talk to Mary. She's on the tennis team. We were talking about the banquet. After that I talked to Carol...about band and stuff.
>
> (student #15)

Giving the teacher what he wants

Parallel to the strategy "Having fun", which achieved students' SOCIALIZING goal, was a second proactive strategy, "Giving the teacher what he wants", which was used by students for PASSING THE COURSE. "Giving the teacher what he wants" took various forms, including, working on class and homework assignments independently, participating in oral drills and class discussions, following the teacher's directions regarding classwork and behavior, and using class "dead time" to study for tests and working on other assignments.

"Dead time" for example, occurred most frequently at the beginning of class as the class was settling in, and the teacher was occupied with the attendance roll. Some students would use this time to study for quizzes or to finish their homework rather than socialize with their friends.

> (I) read on the board to see what's goona happen... because most of the time he has it written on the board ...and it said there was gonna be a quiz...so I studied.

The motivation for "Giving the teacher what he wants" often was externally motivated by fear of the teacher. Often the tactics of this strategy seemed related to students figuring out early that the teacher was strict, and that the suppression of "screwing around" was necessary.

> He said, if you get caught doing anything like screwing around...he'll lower your grade...and I go 'I'm not going to screw around in here like I do in Spanish.' We find him strict.
>
> (student #9)

> I keep quiet in there. I mean, he's sort of got a bad temper. I'm really scared of him.
>
> (student #10)

In general, by "Giving the teacher what he wants", students were trying to complete whatever the necessary requirements were, as set by the teacher, for PASSING THE COURSE.

> I asked Mr. Span what information...I was suppose to get, because I was almost done and this time I wasn't really messing around. I really wanted to get it done.... I started working on it right away.
>
> (student # 13)

Many students realized that by following this strategy of "Giving the teacher what he wants" could make a big difference in the type of grade they received in the course.

> In that class I've been getting an A. I guess it's just because I do my homework. I do it everyday and turn it in.
>
> (student #11)

Minimizing work

The strategy "Giving the teacher what he wants" was most often observed in those classes which had a strict teacher. A strategy that was more prevalent in classes that were more relaxed was the proactive strategy "Minimizing work". This strategy was used by students to complete their SOCIALIZING while simultaneously PASSING THE COURSE. The purpose was to maximize the amount of time socializing by minimizing the work level necessary to pass the course. The classes in which students were able to use this strategy most freely were the classes that students appreciated the most. It allowed them to fulfill both their goals while fulfilling the teacher's requirements. Tactics used to "Minimize the work" were; cooperation with other students on work assignments, completing assignments according to an 'immediacy' principle, and challenging the teacher on the level of work expectations.

Cooperation with other students on assignments was used consistently in all classes.

> We all help each other to a certain extent....Everytime I look someone is asking someone for answers.
>
> (student #1)

> You know Rod? Well, I did a speech on him and he did a speech on me and we figured that like I write something about me and he'll write something about him and that way we switch, so neither of us has to do information.
>
> (student #10)

The 'immediacy' principle involved students working on assignments that were most immediately due, even if it meant working on them during another class. For, example, homework was given daily in second period Spanish, third period Health, and fourth period English. This homework was due during the next day. Both the Spanish and Health teachers allowed class time for working on the homework assignments. Many students elected not to use this alloted time for working on assignments, but instead for socializing with friends. Consequently these students would use first period the next day to work on their second period Spanish assignment, second period to work on third period Health assignments, and third period to work on fourth period English assignments. Since some of the work was done at home or was easily completed in a few minutes (often by copying another student's work), this left plenty of time for socializing.

> From the time I walk in (to second period) I did the rest of my homework, see, because I did some of it in Agriculture (first period)...and then I started writing on my Health Science...once in a while I do English (fourth period) in there (second period).
>
> (student #6)

> We do most of our homework in math for health because it's our next class. I notice every once in a while I'm caught doing my English in (health) class because that's not a class that there's really a lot of homework so I don't really do any at home since I can do it during the day sometime. I try to do most of the big assignments at night and during class I can do the other ones right before class.
>
> (student #1)

Students would occassionally challenge the teacher about the amount and degree of classwork, homework or tests. For example, almost every day in health, the teacher lectured from notes that he had written on the board. After his lecture he required students to copy these notes into their notebooks.

One day a student asked the teacher if it wouldn't be easier to xerox the notes instead of writing them on the board and give them out to students so that they wouldn't have to copy them. Another student chimed in "Yeah, then you wouldn't have to talk so much." Still another student added "We could have more time to play around." The teacher replied, "I hear you", and instructed the students to continue copying the board notes.

Reactive strategies

The proactive strategies of "Having fun", "Giving the teacher what he wants" and "Minimizing work" were the strategies that students used on a continual basis during the routine events of the class. Two reactive strategies, "Reducing boredom" and "Staying out of trouble", were used to react to, or adapt to, the teacher's agenda as it conflicted with the students' agenda. Although the goals of these reactive strategies were the same as the proactive strategies and had very similar tactics, their intent was different for students. They were used when the classroom situation took on a critical nature from the students' perspective.

Reducing boredom

Class events became critical from the students' perspective in two ways. The first was viewed by students as being the teacher's fault. This occurred when students found the class to be boring. This boredom was often a result of a lack of management skills by the teacher as expected by students. Although students may have wanted to pursue PASSING THE COURSE goals, the boring manner in which the teacher set the requirements for the course caused students to initiate their "Reducing boredom" strategy.

> I figure if the class is as boring as anything, the kids are more likely going to liven it up.... We don't do anything in class...I try to listen but it's kind of hard when you have something here and something there,

> all over the class. It's just real hard for a person to concentrate. The way I see things in class now there's some that will want to get involved in it and the next moment just want to screw around because it is, I find it at times very boring.
>
> (student #1)

The tactics most often used for "Reducing boredom" were, peer cooperation, humor, and playful activities. Whereas "Having fun" was thought of by students as a way to extend their natural desire to socialize in the classroom, "Reducing boredom" focused on achieving SOCIALIZING by subverting the teacher's work agenda which students found boring. "Reducing boredom" often took on an aggressive or defient nature toward the teacher and class activities. For example, the humor used to reduce boredom was often sarcastic and demeaning. Directed against the teacher, this humor took on the form of trying to "burn" the teacher. This was accomplished by making sarcastic comments to the teacher about his behavior or lecture in an attempt to embarrass him.

> See they try to burn Mr. Ag...you just say something that kind of embarrasses him and gets him mad. That's what we usually do. Just to make everyone laugh.
>
> (student #5)

Play tactics were often directed at class routines or the method of instruction by the teacher that students found boring. This included times when either the teacher was covering material that the students already believed they knew or when there was a lot of "dead time" in the class.

> Well we're taking it easy because me and Andrew...are Mexican. I probably know more Spanish than Mr. Span does. So we just make jokes and then like sometimes you know how we drive Mr. Span crazy? We try to do anything to waste time cause it's boring.... Andrew just sometimes likes to be smart (to the teacher). Like I said, we get kind of bored, so we try to put a little flavor into the students.
>
> (student #13)

Staying out of trouble

The second way that students viewed classroom events as being critical was when they became overly ambitious in achieving SOCIALIZING with the "Having fun" strategy and totally ignored the teacher's directions regarding class ork. This often resulted in the teacher initiating strict measures to deal with controlling students' socializing. While most students placed the blame for this type of critical event on themselves, other students blamed the teacher for allowing the class to become too relaxed. Regardless of whom students blamed, they initiated the strategy of "Staying out of trouble". This strategy was the reverse of "Reducing boredom". Students who primarily were interested in pursuing SOCIALIZING by "Having fun" sometimes found themselves in the position of having to initiate the reactive strategy "Staying out of trouble" to obtain at least a minimal grade for PASSING THE COURSE. Although some of the tactics for "Staying out of trouble" may not have helped students to improve their grades directly, they at least kept the student in class. By being kicked out of class, it would be much more difficult for the student to pass the course.

Several "Staying out of trouble" tactics included; 'cooling it' by terminating talk and play activities, initiating a change in seats to get away from someone who was causing trouble, guessing on homework assignments so that the teacher would not fail you for not doing the work, protecting friends who were going to get into trouble, and by dumping blame on non-friends.

> After 'rule one' (a teacher reprimand) I stop messing around. Mr. Span usually has somebody move up front. That usually quiets us down.
>
> (student #13)

> Well, first of all David wanted to start getting good grades so he didn't want to fool around. So he moved away (from us).
>
> (student #7)

> For questions in health...I guess at the answer, because I don't think he looks at them.
>
> (student #4)
>
> A lot of people just write anything down. I've done that before because I didn't feel like doing it...so I just made up long string sentences.
>
> (student #15)
>
> He wasn't paying attention and the teacher called on him. I tell him real fast (the answer)...and he won't get into trouble.
>
> (student #5)
>
> Mike is an ass. He tells on you if you do something wrong. He does the same things we do, but when we do it he tells.
>
> (student #10)

Student typifications

Thus far six strategies have been described that students used during three types of classroom events to help them achieve their two classroom goals. Students varied in the degree of use of each of these six strategies according to the relative importance they attributed to these goals of SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE. This variation in strategy use can be viewed, from the students' perspective, along a WORK/PLAY continuum.

Although a continuum, students could usually be identified and clustered into four major groups according to the ratio of time spent SOCIALIZING or PASSING THE COURSE. These four major student groups were: (1) "Play", (2) "Play/Work", (3) "Work/Play" and (4) "Work".

The clustering of students along this WORK/PLAY continuum was based on three sources. First, students viewed themselves and other students in this manner. Students referred to themselves as "playing" or "screwing around" in class; or "doing all the work". Second, teachers talked about students in terms of "working" or "doing homework" and in terms of "not working and playing around". Third, research on "Play" and "Work" as dimensions of social contexts of classrooms lends support to viewing groups of students as "workers" and "players" (Block, 1981).

Using this WORK/PLAY framework, Figure 4 illustrates these four student groups indicating the pattern of strategies students used to acheive their two goals.

Figure 4.

The upper right hand diagram of Figure 4 (I) shows that "Play" students were almost exclusively concerned with SOCIALIZING, with little concern for PASSING THE COURSE. They spent the major portion of their time and efforts, while in the classroom, engaging in the "Having fun" (HF) strategy to achieve their socializing goals. Whatever passing the course goals were achieved seemed to be an indirect result of cooperating with other students in "Minimizing work" (MW) to increase the time for socializing. The "Reducing boredom" strategy did not seem to be a concern for these "Play" students, since they were already putting maximum effort into socializing and therefore not bored. They also seemed to be unable or unwilling to engage in the "Staying out of trouble" strategy. They were the students who were in both behavioral and academic trouble consistently. Only a small minority of students (5%) were identified as "Play".

> Roger always plays around alot in class, flying footballs and throwing things around the room.
>
> (student #2)

> We got kicked out...me and Albert were screwing around ...Albert he doesn't do his homework. He just turns in his paper with just his name.
>
> (student #9)

> Albert is failing every class and playing...he doesn't really care about school or his grades.
>
> (student #1)

> I don't think they try to make trouble. They're just trying to have fun in that class.
>
> (student #15)

The upper left hand diagram of Figure 4 (II) indicates that "Play/Work" students, while primarily concerned with SOCIALIZING, were also concerned with at least minimally PASSING THE COURSE. Their major efforts were focused on socializing with friends, but they skillfully incorporated enough of the strategies necessary to pass the course. Often "Play/Work" students engaged in the exact same "Having fun" (HF) tactics as the "Play" students. The major difference was that "Play/Work" students usually knew when to cease their "Having fun" behavior in order to "Give the teacher what he wanted" (GT) to also pass the course with at least a D. "Play/Work" students also made extensive use of the strategies "Minimizing work" (MW) and "Reducing boredom" (RB) to achieve their socializing goals. The "Play" students did not.

> Everybody messes around once. And like in Spanish we have to mess around...you've got to admit it's kind of boring....So we added some fun to the class...but sometimes we're like learning...it's not like really messing around, you answer the questions.
>
> (student #13)

> Sometimes I listen and sometimes I don't...sometimes I mess around in there....I've been fucking off but now I'm starting to do my work.
>
> (student #5)

> I started talking about basketball and fooling around... with people around me, talking...just trying to make jokes....Then Mr. Heed told us to do homework... I didn't do it. I figure I already got my grade for the semester, why work now. Because I got a "D", so that's a passing grade.
>
> (student #10)

The lower right hand diagram of Figure 4 (III) indicates that "Work/Play" students put their major efforts into PASSING THE COURSE with a good grade. They also sought SOCIALIZING but only when they were sure that it would not adversely effect their getting a good grade to pass the course. These students mainly concerned themselves with "Giving the teacher what he wanted" (GT) and "Staying out of trouble" (ST) strategies. However, they also frequently

used the "Minimizing work" (MW) strategy to achieve some SOCIALIZING while simultaneously doing the work necessary for a good grade.

> As soon as Mr. Eng tells us, we get down to work... we're still listening to...jokes, but we're doing the work.
> (student #5)

> I was talking to my friend...and then he gave us an assignment...so I just started up and got three done.
> (student #4)

> We skimmed through my book figuring things out. We help each other alot...I kind of encourage him on to keep working ... if you're smart you'll stay in the mellow range and you won't be doing stupid things. So you just won't get caught by doing anything and you won't get in trouble.
> (student #11)

Over three fourths (78%) of all the students were classified as either "Play/Work" or "Work/Play" students.

The lower right hand diagram of Figure 4 (IV) shows that "Work" students were almost exclusively concerned with obtaining high grades in PASSING THE COURSE and showed minimal concerned with SOCIALIZING with others. Whatever socializing that they did was usually a result of obtaining help or information to better assure themselves of achieving a high grade in the class. They consistently were always "Giving the teacher what he wanted" (GT) as the strategy to receive a high grade.

> I don't like telling people the answers. I just go on with the work.
> (student #11)

> Those two quiet guys...they never make any noise... They're good guys,,,they're just too quiet and do the work.
> (student #7)

> If I wanted to work with somebody it would be someone like Jim, cause he's smart and he's the kind of guy who doesn't talk alot. He listens.
> (student #8)

Although a minority (14%) of the students were "Work" students, it was a larger group than the "Play" group. Interestingly, all of the students in

the "Play" group were male, while 2/3 of the "Work" students were female.

> Almost all the girls are really quiet, so you don't really see them talking or fooling around...it's just the boys that do it...that screw around alot.
> (student #1)

> The serious ones I think would have to be all the brains (girls) that sit over on that one side, Betty, Valerie, Sally.
> (student #11)

Classroom Management Parameters: Clarity & Cooperation

From the students' perspective, there were two major classroom interaction parameters that influenced the strategies that they used and thus the predominate type of students that were involved in these strategies in each class. The first parameter was the clarity with which the teacher communicated his academic and behavioral expectations to students. The less clear these expectations were communicated, the greater the tendancy for students to emphasize SOCIALIZING. A second parameter was the degree of cooperation that existed between students and the teacher to establish a comfortable classroom environment. When this cooperation was facilitated by the teacher's realization of the duality of students' goals, the greater the cooperation in class activities the teacher received from students. The difference between the observed classes of how students responded to these two parameters is outlined below with the help of Figure 5 and Figure 6.

In Agriculture, the teacher was very ambiguous regarding his behavioral and academic expectations. This was due to the lack of importance that the teacher placed on classroom learning and his desire to provide an unstructured classroom environment. Although this provided a very informal relationship between the teacher and students, the lack of structure created an environment in which the teacher and students were paying little attention to one another and very little cooperation.

Figure 5.

Figure 6.

"Having fun" was the major strategy that students used in this class since little was expected of them academically. They spent most of their time in class SOCIALIZING, since a minimal amount of work was necessary for PASSING THE COURSE. Thus the majority of students were play oriented, 60% either "Play" or "Play/Work".

In Spanish, the teacher was very explicit about both behavioral and academic expectations. He spent almost the entire first two class periods lecturing to students about what these expectations were. He even had each student sign and have their parents sign a form stating what these expectaions were. He was the most academically oriented of all the teachers, with very little class "dead time". He obtained cooperation from the majority of students through fear of failure. Thus the majority of students were work oriented (70%) and primarily used the strategy "Giving the teacher what he wants" in order to be able to pass the course. However, there were 4 bilingual (Spanish/English) students, who were often bored and continually tried to create a more socializing environment. They were often engaged in the "Reducing boredom" strategy.

Health-Ed was the class that was most enjoyed by students. The teacher was explicit about his behavioral and academic expectations, but neither were felt by most students to be unreasonable. This was due to the flexibility yet fairness in which the teacher treated students. Although a large amount of class work was expected of students, they were allowed to socialize while completing their assignments. Also the teacher was very personable, relatively young (30), had gone through the same school system and knew many of the students relatives personally as friends. This helped to establish a high level of communication and cooperation between the students and the teacher. Students were able to use all three of their proactive strategies; "Having fun", "Giving the teacher what he wants", and "Minimizing work" to achieve both their SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE goals.

The two 18-day English classes were taught by a teacher who had very high behavioral standards. In fact, the first days of class he announced that the purpose of freshmen English was primarily to teach new students to the high school how to behave and secondarily to teach students English. He often spent extented periods of class time to reprimand a student to set an example for other students. This was usually through embarrassment and belittling the student offender to bring him "in line". Thus students were usually very quiet in his class and worked on class assignments, since misbehavior could lower thier grade and prevent them from PASSING THE COURSE. For example, a test might be worth 25 points, but being tardy was -10 points. There was a definite shift in the strategies used and the type of students that predominated in the first English class (English 900) and the second class (English 901). This was due to several students failing the first class and having to repeat due to their failure for "Having fun" and not "Giving the teacher what he wanted" the first time. Thus the amount of "Giving the teacher what he wants" shifted upwards and "Having fun" shifted downward. Likewise, an upward shift occured in the number of work-oriented students from 67% to 80%.

Thus, from the students' perspective, the classroom in which management occured most effectively was Health-Ed. It was in this class that the teacher was both explicitly clear about class academic and behavioral standards, as well as, able to establish a cooperative and relaxed classroom environment. This enabled students to enjoy SOCIALIZING while fulfilling the requirements for PASSING THE COURSE.

Conclusion

This study suggests that the majority of students have two major classroom goals, SOCIALIZING and PASSING THE COURSE. It further suggests that once students have initially finished "Figuring out the teacher", they begin "Having fun", "Giving the teacher what he wants" and "Minimizing work" to achieve these goals during the routine events of the class. If the classroom situation becomes critical, students then resort to "Reducing boredom" and "Staying out of trouble" strategies to achieve their goals.

Students appreciate clarity from teachers regarding classroom expectations and appreciate cooperation with teachers when the teacher allows them to pursue both their goals. This suggests that students strive toward a certain economy regarding the management of the classroom. They want to know what is expected of them by their teachers in order to fulfill the necessary requirements for PASSING THE COURSE, at what ever grade level they desire, and thus maximize the time they will have for SOCIALIZING.

Future research is needed to investigate in greater detail the extent to which these students' goals and strategies influence teachers in adjusting their classroom management agenda. Greater emphasis is needed on the interactive nature of these student strategies with the management strategies of teachers. A "social ATI" research framework for investigating students PLAY/WORK aptitude as it interacts with classroom parameters such as teacher clarity and student-teacher cooperation should be helpful in providing valuable information to help teachers establish a classroom environment in which achievement of both students' and teachers' classroom goals are optimized. Instead of simply investigating classroom management for finding better ways for teachers to achieve their goals through strategies to control student behavior, it is time

to blaze a new trail that will help teachers achieve their goals in cooperation with students achieving their goals. Perhaps this will eventually help students, as well as teachers, to view classrooms as pleasant places to learn and teach, rather than as prisons where they are sentenced to be.

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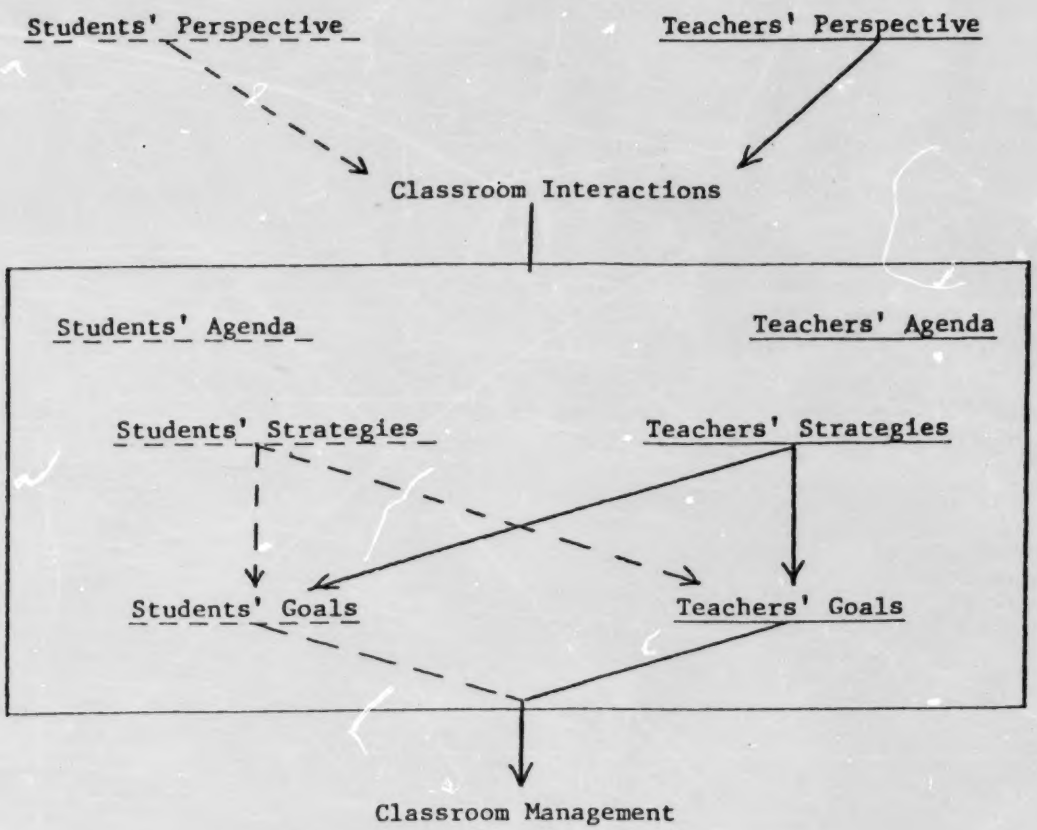
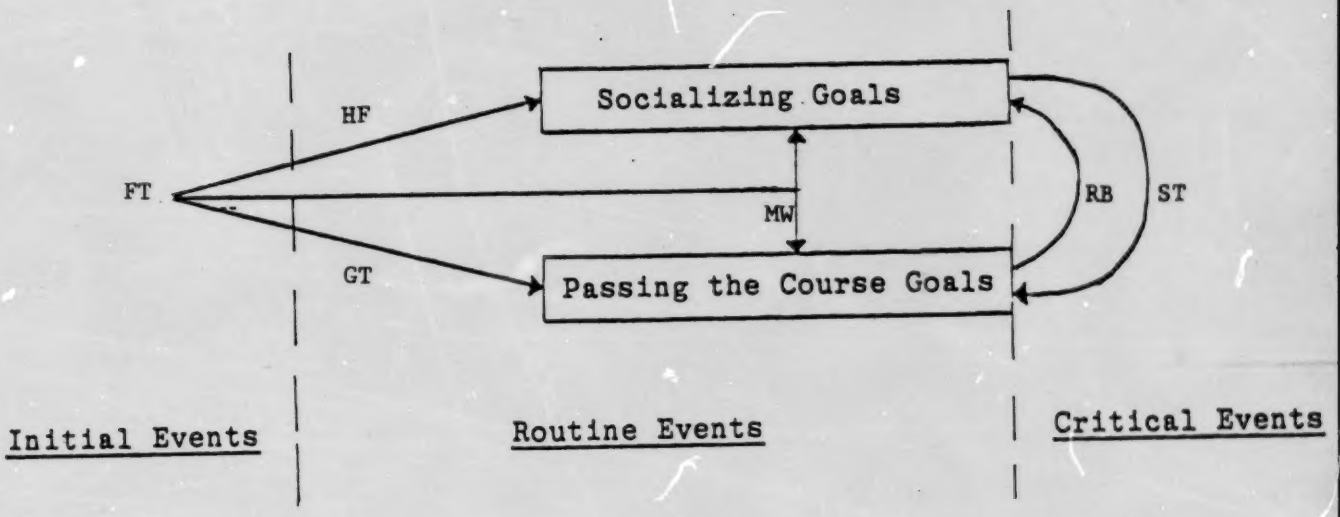


_____ Line of historical "bidirectional" classroom management research from the teachers' perspective.

_ _ _ _ Line of "bidirectional" research on classroom management as presented in this study from the students' perspective.

Figure 1. Schema of "bidirectional" classroom interaction effecting classroom management.



Strategy Key:

FT - "Figuring out the teacher"

HF - "Having fun"

GT - "Giving the teacher what he wants"

MW - "Minimizing work"

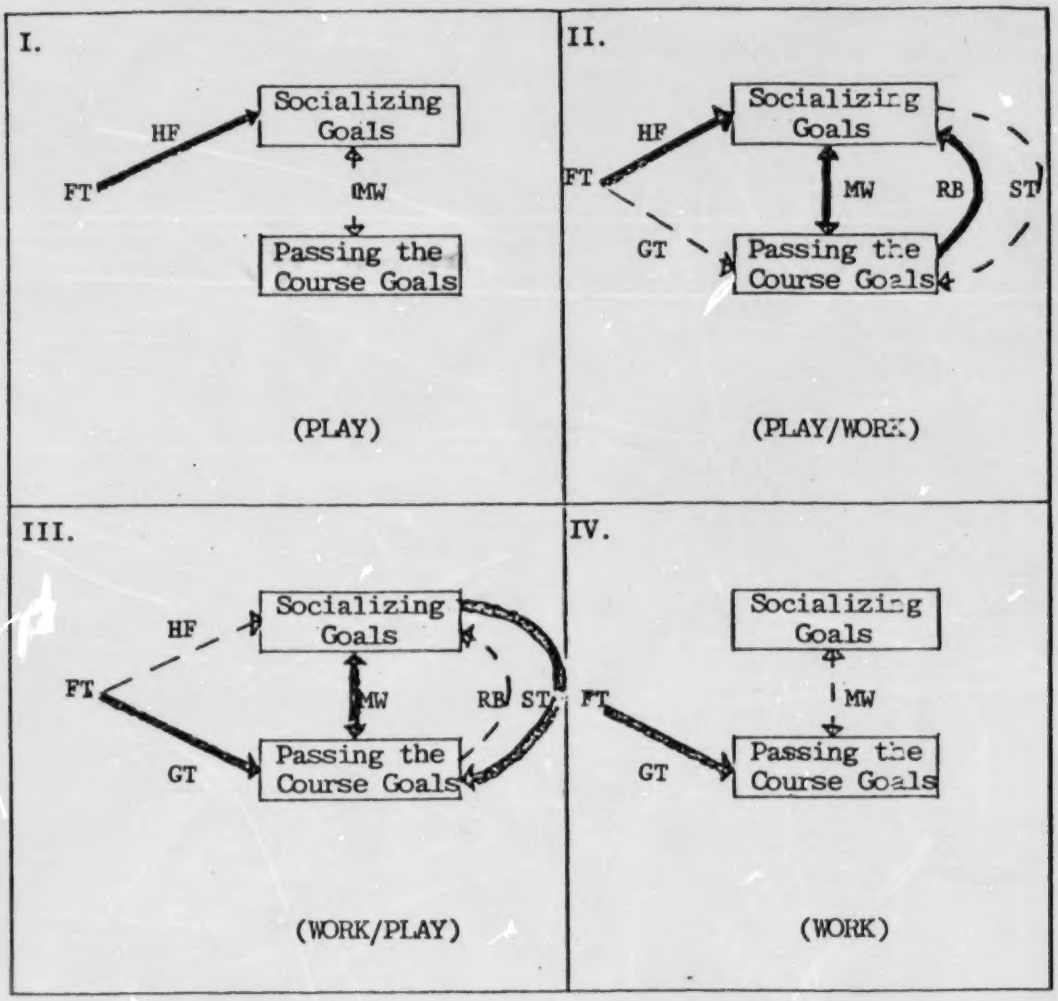
RB - "Reducing boredom"

ST - "Staying out of trouble"

Figure 2. Students' Strategies by Type of Events

Student	Socializing		Passing Course		Psych. Withdraw	
	before probes	after probes	before probes	after probes	before probes	after probes
S.1	*	*	*	*		*
S.2		*	*	*		
S.3	*	*	*	*		
S.4	*	*	*	*	*	
S.5	*	*	*	*		
S.6		*	*	*		
S.7	*	*	*	*		*
S.8	*	*	*	*		*
S.9	*	*	*	*		
S.10	*	*	*	*	*	*
S.11		*	*	*		
S.12	*	*		*		
S.13	*	*	*	*		
S.14	*	*	*	*		
S.15		*	*	*		

Figure 3. Goals mentioned (*) by students during interviews.



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——→ major use of strategy

– – – – → minor use of strategy

Figure 4. Typifications of Strategies used by four major Student Groups in the Classroom.

Student Type

CLASS	PLAY	PLAY/WORK	WORK/PLAY	WORK	NEITHER	TOTALS
Agriculture	20% (3)	40% (6)	27% (4)	0% (0)	13% (2)	100% (15)
Spanish I	4% (1)	26% (6)	48% (11)	22% (5)	0% (0)	100% (23)
Health - Ed	3% (1)	33% (12)	44% (16)	17% (6)	3% (1)	100% (36)
English 900	0% (0)	25% (7)	60% (17)	7% (2)	7% (2)	100% (28)
English 901	4% (1)	16% (4)	60% (15)	20% (5)	0% (0)	100% (25)
Totals	5% (6)	28% (35)	50% (63)	14% (18)	3% (5)	100% (127)*

(* This total includes students who were in more than one class. There were 98 different students in these five classes.)

Figure 5. Summary of percentages of student types in each observed classroom.

	Figuring out the teacher	Having fun	Giving the teacher what he wants	Minimizing work	Reducing boredom	Staying out of trouble
Agriculture	No Estimate	HIGH	LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	LOW
Spanish I	No Estimate	LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	LOW
Health - Ed	No Estimate	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	LOW	LOW
English 900	No Estimate	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW
English 901	No Estimate	LOW	HIGH	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM

Figure 6. Summary of degree of use of students' strategies in each class.

Appendix A

Student Interview Guide

I. Introductory Statements:
- A. Ask permission to tape interview.
- B. State the purpose of the interview.
- C. Pledge confidentiality.
- D. Reassure interviewee, make them feel comfortable.
- E. Inform interviewee of note taking.

II. Student Data: Name
Grade
Class
Age
Sex
Date
Time

III. Particular Day Question:

Tell me in as much detail as you can recall, about what went on in (observed class) today; what you did from the time you entered the class, until you left. Tell me what you did, who you did it with, when you did it, and where you were when you did it.

IV. Follow up Probes:

You mentioned (those strategies,persons,encounters referred to by the student in his/her initial statement) , could you tell me more about that ?

V. Normal Day Question:

Tell me in as much detail as you can what normally goes on in (observed class) on a regular day; what you do normally from the time you enter the clas, until you leave. Tell me what you normally do, who you do it with, when you do it and where you are in the classroom when you do it.

VI. Follow up Probes:

You mentioned (those strategies, persons, encounters, referred to by the student in his/her statement), could you tell me more about that ?

VII. General Guide Question:

I was wondering about (those strategies observed by the reseacher, but not mentioned by the student; mentioned by students in previous interviews; suggested by the literature). Do you or anyone else in the class ever take part in these ? If you do, with whom do you do them with, when and where ?

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Guide

I. Introductory Statements:
   A. Ask permission to tape interview.
   B. Pledge confidentiality.
   C. Inform interviewee of note taking.
   D. Reassure interviewee, make them feel comfortable.

II. Teacher Data: Name
# of years teaching at SHS
Class observed
Date
Time

III. General Classroom Management Philosophy:

Could you tell me what your general philosophy is regarding classroom management ? Could you describe how you implemented this philosophy in the class that I observed ?

IV. Follow up Probes:

You mentioned (particular incidents, encounters mentioned by the teacher). Could you tell me more about that ?

V. Observation Probes:

I noticed (particular events, activities, behaviors, etc., observed by the author in the observed class but not mentioned by the teacher). Could you tell me about that ?

VI. Student Interview Probes:

Students have mentioned (events, behaviors, strategies,etc. not mentioned by the teacher but mentioned by students in their interviews). Could you tell me your perspective about that ?

VII. Student Strategies Question:

Could you share with me your perspectives about strategies that students use that effect the managment of the classroom ? How do you deal with these ?

VIII. Debriefing of Teacher:

IX. Thanks for cooperation: